

REMARKS

Applicant requests favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections set forth in the above-noted Office Action in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 1-12, 14, 15, 17-19, and 21-27 remain pending. Of these, claims 1-11, 14, and 22-27 stand withdrawn from consideration as being directed to a non-elected invention. Of the claims not withdrawn from consideration, claims 12, 15, and 21 are independent. Claims 12, 15, and 21 have been amended. Support for the amendments can be found throughout the originally-filed disclosure. Accordingly, Applicant submits that the amendments do not include new matter.

Claims 15 and 17-19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101. Applicant has amended claim 15 to attend to the matter noted in the Office Action as giving rise to the rejection. Therefore, Applicant requests withdrawal of the rejection.

Claims 12, 15, 17-19 and 21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 over JP Document No. 2002-016812 (Yoshida et al.) in view of U.S. Patent Nos. 5,868,279 (Funamizu et al.) and 5,289,570 (Suzuki).

As recited in independent Claim 12, Applicant's invention is directed to an image forming apparatus that has an image repeat function capable of arranging a plurality of the same data in a first direction and in a second direction, on the same face of a recording paper. A first accepting unit accepts, from a user, a number of the data to be arranged in the first direction, independently of a number of the data to be arranged in the second

direction. A second accepting unit accepts, from the user, a number of the data to be arranged in the second direction, independently of the number to be arranged in the first direction. Moreover, a selecting unit selects between (1) a first layout mode in which mutually adjacent data of the number accepted by the first accepting unit are arranged in the first direction with at least one interval, and mutually adjacent data of the number accepted by second accepting unit are arranged in the second direction with at least one interval, and (2) a second layout mode in which the mutually adjacent data are arranged without an interval.

Independent Claims 15 and 21 are directed to a layout method and a computer readable medium, respectively. These independent claims recite features generally similar to those discussed above with respect to independent claim 12.

Thus, with the present invention, a user sets a desired value for the number of the same data to be arranged in a first direction and the number to be arranged in the second direction, independently of each other. Consequently, the user can set different values for the arrangements in the different directions. In addition, the user can select whether to arrange the data with or without intervals between adjacent data.

Yoshida et al. is directed to a color reproduction apparatus. The apparatus described therein is configured such that an A6-size image can be printed multiple times on an A4-size paper, in a main scanning direction and in a sub-scanning direction. In that manner, four A6-size images may be printed on one A4 sheet. However, in the printing apparatus of Yoshida et al., the determination of the number of identical images to be printed on the

recording sheet is not set by the user, but is automatically determined. Consequently, unlike the present invention, the system in Yoshida et al. does not allow a user to set a number of the same data to be arranged in a first direction independently of the number to be arranged in the second direction on the recording paper.

Funamizu et al. is directed to a copy apparatus adapted to copy images of two or more originals on a single sheet of paper. The copy machine accepts instructions concerning the number of originals to be printed on one sheet of paper. However, while the copy apparatus allows the user to select the number of images to be printed in a set layout, it does not allow the user to determine the number to be arranged in first and second directions, independently.

Suzuki is directed to a picture editing system. The system described therein provides for formation of a boundary region between picture images to be output on a sheet of paper. However, the number of images to be output on the sheet is determined based on the number of original documents. Thus, a user does not set the number of images to be output in first and second directions.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicant submits that Yoshida et al., Funamizu et al., and Suzuki, taken alone or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest, at least, the features of (a) accepting, from a user, a number of data arranged in a first direction, independently of a number of the data arranged in a second direction; (b) accepting, from a user, a number of the data arranged in a second direction, independently of the number of data arranged in the first direction, and (c) selecting (1) a first layout mode, in the image repeat function, in

which mutually adjacent same data of the number accepted for the first direction are arranged with at least one interval, and the mutually adjacent same data of the number accepted for the second direction are arranged with at least one interval, and (2) a second layout mode in which the adjacent data are arranged without intervals, as generally recited in independent Claims 12, 15, and 21.

The remaining claims still under consideration are dependent from claim 15 and, thus, may be considered allowable for the reasons discussed above. Applicant notes, however, that those dependent claims recite additional features further defining over the applied documents. Favorable and independent consideration of those claims is requested.

For the reasons discussed above, Applicant requests withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103 and allowance of this application.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continued to be directed to our address given below.

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